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LETTER DATED 14 JUNE 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter dated 5 June 1997 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, addressed to the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission. The Deputy Prime Minister conveys the concern of the Iraqi side that the analysis of missile remnants has been unconscionably protracted and that the transmission of the results has been delayed without regard for the consequences, which include the prolonged maintenance of the embargo and the continued suffering of the Iraqi people.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 5 June 1997 from the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq addressed to the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission Established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

I have studied your letter of 3 June 1997 addressed to Lieutenant General Amer Mohammad Rashid containing your response to his inquiry as to the results of the analysis of the missile remnants.

The letter is extremely disturbing and raises many questions. On the one hand, it contains no information on the results of the analysis of the missile remnants, while, on the other hand, it makes the operation open-ended and goes beyond our shared understanding of the timetables for completion. I should like to recall that in our two periodic meetings in Baghdad, in February and April 1997, you explained the operation, the kinds of analysis to be performed and the expected timetable. At the February meeting you told us that the preliminary results of the analyses could be ready within weeks, and that if the Special Commission had begun moving the missiles in November 1996, it would have been possible to begin the analyses in mid-December and include the results in the Special Commission's April semi-annual report. At the April periodic meeting you told us that work had begun on the missile analyses in the United States of America on 24 March 1997 and that work would begin in France on either 4 or 7 April 1997. The laboratories would inform the Commission of the results on the basis of priorities. Some preliminary results could be expected within weeks, and the final results would be ready in August 1997.

It would appear from your above-mentioned letter that you are only prepared to present preliminary results after an extremely long delay, and that you intend to undertake endless or at least very lengthy analyses that will extend well beyond the timetable you gave us. This will substantially delay the strenuous efforts we are making to close the missiles file and make progress towards closing the other files. I should like to make it clear to you that this extension has no objective basis and is expensive. It is intended to delay indefinitely the closure of the weapons files, with no regard for the consequences, namely, the continuation of the sanctions regime and the suffering of the Iraqi people. This is a course I have cautioned against at our meetings and in my letters to you in recent months.

After more than six years you are about to leave your post as Chairman, and it would seem that we are still caught up in the twists and turns of a never-ending story. The situation regarding the analyses and the other measures currently being carried out as part of the Special Commission's activities give rise to profound disquiet and raise serious questions about the extent of the Commission's commitment to complete its mandate under Section C expeditiously and in an impartial and businesslike manner.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister